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Governor's Rural Broadband Initiative: Closing the Digital Divide

LANSING: The Michigan Broadband Development Authority (MBDA) today announced it closed on a \$600,000 loan to Pasty.net, a broadband service provider located in Calumet, to bring high-speed internet service to more residents and businesses through out the Upper Peninsula.

The \$600,000 loan will assist Pasty.net to construct, acquire, install and deploy broadband towers, access point equipment, and customer premise equipment (CPE) throughout the Upper Peninsula (UP), immediately focusing on the underserved areas of Keweenaw, Houghton, Baraga, Delta, Alger and Marquette counties. Loan proceeds may also be used to upgrade assets in other underserved regions of the UP where Pasty.net has existing infrastructure in place.

"The MBDA is pleased to be able to provide financing for this new project. It will make high-speed internet access available to an increasing number of residential and business customers in the Upper Peninsula, drawing one step closer to closing the digital divide," said James W. Butler III, Executive Vice President of the MBDA.

The Governor's Rural Broadband Initiative (RBI) was created to ensure the expansion of high-speed internet access to the rural and underserved areas of our state by targeting the funding mechanism of the MBDA to these areas. Governor Jennifer M. Granholm said, "We are thrilled to be able to help the folks in the Upper Peninsula to gain access to affordable internet service. There are so many applications for its use: public safety, healthcare and education to name a few."

In conjunction with this loan, Pasty.net has also been selected by Marquette County to receive a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) to deploy wireless broadband network facilities in the Digital Divide Investment Program (DDIP) townships located within Marquette County. These CDBG funds are targeted to deploy affordable broadband in the low and moderate income communities of Marquette County.

Charlie Hopper, President of Pasty.net said, "Receiving the MBDA loan and the grant monies will allow Pasty.net to expand coverage as well as improve quality of service throughout a much larger area of the Upper Peninsula."

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